DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 094 SO 009 632

TITLE	The Tuareg: Nature Changes a Life Style. Mini-Module.
INSTITUTION	African-American Inst., New York, N.Y. School Services Div.
PUB DATE	[75]
NOTE	7p.
AVAILABLE FROM	African-American Institute, 833 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017 ($0.50, 4 for $1.50)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*African Culture; Area Studies; Climatic Factors; *Cultural Awareness; Discussion (Teaching Technique); *Environmental Influences; Instructional Materials; *Learning Modules; Life Style; Resource Materials; Social Problems; Unit Plan; *Water Resources
IDENTIFIERS	*Africa

ABSTRACT

This module contains a description of the Tuareg society in Africa, a list of resources for teachers and students to learn how the African drought is affecting Tuareg life-style, and a lesson plan with eight questions for class discussion. The social strata are described within the Tuareg, ranging from nomadic herd-tending nobles to servants who tend farms. Rank and clan affiliation are inherited through the maternal side, and land is inherited through the paternal side. Women educate the children. Recent years of drought have caused herds to die and crops to fail, thereby breaking up relationships between nobles and farming servants and forcing the clans to camp near towns they had previously avoided. The resource list refers students to films, articles, and organizations that study effects of the drought and explore development alternatives. The questions for class discussion encourage students to compare practical and fashionable aspects of clothing, hypothesize immigration effects on townspeople, and list social and psychological problems resulting from changes in life-style for children and adults. (AV)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

African-American Institute

833 United Nations Plaza New York, New York 10017 Tel: (212) 661-0800

SCHOOL

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Evelyn Jones
Rick
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER"

ED132094

SP009632

THE TUAREG : NATURE CHANGES A LIFE STYLE

Sahel is an Arabic word for "shore". These days, it is applied to the southern belt of the Sahara Desert, stretching across the continent of Africa. Over the past six years the Sahel has been the scene of a drought that is already one of the most severe and devastating in history. It has killed hundred of thousands of people, forced millions more from their homes, decimated the cattle population, and allowed the desert to swallow 12 to 50 miles of Sahelian land a year - all of this in an area about two-thirds the size of the continental United States.

The population of the area is estimated to be roughly 50 million people. U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim has said that up to 10 million of them may face starvation. More will be acutely affected by the disruption and problems the drought carries in its wake.

To understand more concretely how the drought has affected these people, let us look closely at one society in the area, the Tuareg.

The Tuareg have lived for centuries on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert and have been most active in trans-Saharan trade. In 1970, there were about 400,000 Tuaregs; today, there are many fewer. These people depend almost entirely on their camels, sheep and goats, though some had also taken up date-, wheat-, and vegetable-growing at oases.

Their society can be divided into "classes", though the term implies rigid distinctions that are either non-existent or more fluid than we tend to see them. Generally, the nobles decide where and when to move in search of pasture or trade while their followers look after the animals. Craftsmen and blacksmiths make up a separate professional stratum and a servant group handles domestic work.

Among the Tuareg it is the men not the women who cover their faces. The style seems to make a great deal of sense for it protects them from the hot sun and blowing sand. Some writers have argued, however, that the practice is more one of fashion than practicality. Yet the Tuareg themselves says that it is bad manners to reveal your mouth in company and frequently adjust their veils while conversing. One anthropologist has suggested that the veil gives a man "cool" since he can hide his expressions and feelings behind it.

Each group of Tuareg can be divided into clans. The nobles in the group are responsible for finding grazing land and generally protecting their followers. From the leading clans the whole people's leaders is chosen by the family head and then he is confirmed by the other clans. If he fails to lead wisely, he can be removed from office.

Office usually passes from a man to his oldest sister's oldest son, for the Tuareg inherit rank and clan affiliation through their mothers. Thus marriage is the main avenue "up"the social ladder for a man. He does, however, live with his father's relatives and inherits property through his father.

Tuareg women, thus, occupy a rather unique position. This is enhanced by the other Tuareg customs and traditions.. Though most are Muslim, Tuareg marry only one spouse: they also marry rather late - mid-twenties the average for women, early thirties for the men. Women also retain full rights to their own property after marriage and it is the women who read, write, keep alive the people's history and educate the children in these areas.

The Tuareg, like other herders, hold that man's highest occupation is tending animals and, have traditionally shunned farming. Often they set their servants up as farmers so that they could have an assured supply of grain. Many of these settlements are near large towns so that they could visit the outskirts of the city, unload and pick up goods for trade and collect farm products. Most have no desire to enter the towns or mingle with the inhabitants; often they do not even speak the language of the townspeople.

To these people, then, the drought has been devastating. They have lost virtually all of their herds while the old relationships between them and their farming servants have broken down over the failure or scarcity of grain crops. Furthermore, they have often been crowded into camps near the towns they have shunned and been forced to look for work in these areas or to beg for handouts from those they have long considered beneath themselves. In other words, their way of life, their whole culture, is being threatened.

Some people feel now, that since the rains have returned to the Sahelian regions, the Tuareg will eventually be able to obtain new herds and return to their former way of life. But an increasing numbers of climatologists believe that there have been major world weather shifts that are responsible for the decreasing amounts of rain in the Sahel. They have observed that the temperature of the

earth has dropped gradually over the last decades, causing changes in mass movements and patterns, with the result that the monsoon rains no longer move as far north as they once did. If this theory is valid, man can do little to save the land.

To compound this problem, ecologists also have a theory. They say that well-meaning projects have tapped and drastically lowered the water table under the Sahel region. Will this ever rise again enough to support life in the area?

* * *

SOME RESOURCES ON THE AFRICAN DROUGHT FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Victor D. DuBois. The Drought in West Africa. (3 parts). American Universities Field Staff Reports, Box 150, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755. 1974. $1.00 apiece.

- Excellent short monographs which include graphs, maps and pictures probing causes, results and present situation of the drought in the six Sahelian states. High school reading level.

RAINS (Relief for Africans in Need in the Sahel), 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027.

- Organization deeply involved in relief and exploring development alternatives; has film, slides and other information for classrooms.

African Drought! color. 16 mm. 26 min. $365 sale (preview possible) Available from Xerox Films, 245 Longhill Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

- Focuses on the Tuareg. Shows their hunger and other drought problems.

Hal Sheets and Roger Morris. Disaster in the Desert: Failures of International Relief in the West African Drought. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. 1974. free.

- Critical, comprehensive report on relief efforts, long-term development ideas, etc. Raises fundamental questions regarding possibilities even now that rain seems to be falling. Senior high school reading level.

Social Education. Vol. 38, No. 6. November 1974. $1.75

- The whole issue is devoted to articles for teachers on the world food crisis; includes a special article on the Sahel.

Martin Walker. "Drought" in The New York Times Magazine. June 9, 1974. pp. 11-45.

- Excellent, concise overview of the drought; includes a vareity of opinions on causes and effects. Junior and Senior high school reading levels.

* * *

The African-American Institute
833 United Nations Plaza New York, New York 10017 Tel: (212) 661-0800 Cable: AFRAM
SCHOOL SERVICES DIVISION

THE TUAREG : NATURE CHANGES A LIFE STYLE

- LESSON PLAN -

The farmers, town and city people have also been adversely affected economically by the lack of rain.Because they are permanently in a place, they are easier to reach with food supplies. Too, many of these people feel more "entitled" to relief, as the nomads are not often even citizens of the countries they are flocking to -- i.e., they have always gone back and forth across national borders with little feeling of being citizens of one country as opposed to another.

1. What are some of the problems the Tuareg have to face because of the drought?

- Loss of animals means fundamental economic changes;
- Loss of pride because of having to accept handouts;
- "Psychological" problems because the whole way of life has to change;
- New attitudes among young people who have spent six years growing up in a drought, etc.;
- Changes in diet;
- Loss of trade items;
- Change in relationships between Tuareg and servants.

2. (a) Describe some attributes of Tuareg women.

(a) - Literate (and possibly more so than men as they teach the children). Probably the people's historians and writers (poetry, songs, etc.) It is women who are the key to prestige since children inherit rank through their mother's line. People claim a female ancestor. Retains rights to her own property.

(b) How might they use their knowledge of the people's traditions to wield political power?

(b) - If they know the history they can "refresh" the memories of decision-makers. (i.e., 20 years ago, "X" area of the desert was so dry that the camels died. Since that is north of us it is likely that it hasn't rained there yet.

.../2

(continued)...

Therefore, we shouldn't move north but west).

3. (a) How might townspeople/ farmers react to Tuareg immigration?

- Probably with hostility because extra people and animals tax the land. (Might discuss the whole idea of how people react when their "territory" is violated).

- Possibly sympathetically since the people are in need.

(b) How might government people react when Tuareg move into towns?

- Likely unhappily as they increase pressure for services but have always been difficult to tax.

4. (a) The author suggests that men are veiled for practical reasons and for "fashionable" ones. How does our clothing serve these purposes?

(a) - Practical: sweaters for warmth; heavy materials; outer wear for outdoors; cooler clothing for indoors because of central heating.

- Fashionable: "bulky" sweaters coats; longer skirts for warmth, pants, halters in summer; sunglasses are sometimes used to disguise our true feelings.

(b) What are some of the "taboos" we have regarding clothing. Are these changing?

(b) - Mini-skirts were/are a scandal to some; men are beginning to carry purses, a "feminine" fashion; opposition to women wearing trousers.

(c) Can you think of other clothing taboos from our own and other cultures?

(c) - Some Muslim women still wear the veil. Roman Catholic women used to cover heads with hats in church. Jewish men cover their heads at prayer.

Enrichment

1. How can we Americans help alleviate the problems of these people? (RAINS is an excellent source for action programs).
2. Find our more about the Tuareg. (See Sonia Bleeker. The Tuareg. New York: William Morrow, 1966) How might the position of women change because of the drought?

* * *